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AUTHOR Gonzales, Juan L., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on sociological and demographic characteristics of Hispanics, particularly Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans living in the United States. Sections are organized around data tables and figures (based primarily on 1990 census data), with explanatory text, and cover minority populations in the United States, Latino subgroups, Latino geographic distribution by state and selected metropolitan area, Latino subgroups in Los Angeles County and San Francisco County, sources of U.S. immigration, undocumented aliens by state and country of origin, annual income of legal Latino immigrants and percentage on welfare, income and poverty statistics, and education statistics. Education statistics include percentages of various subgroup populations with less than 5 years education, with high school education or more, and with 4 years of college or more; and Latino high school graduates, college graduates, and postgraduate degrees by state. There are very real differences among Latinos and between Latinos and non-Latinos in terms of their socioeconomic conditions and educational achievement. While as a group only half of all Latinos graduate from high school, the variation among states is significant both for high school graduation rates and college graduation rates. Contains 16 references and 20 data tables and figures. (SV)

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**Discrimination and Conflict:
Minority Status and the Latino Community
in the United States**

by: Juan L. Gonzales, Jr.

From *Immigration and Ethnic Communities: A Focus on Latinos*

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Discrimination and Conflict: Minority Status and the Latino Community in the United States

Juan L. Gonzales, Jr.

This chapter focuses on sociological and demographic characteristics of Hispanics, especially Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, living in the United States. While Spanish-speaking groups share a common historical, linguistic, and cultural background, they differ in many respects, including their level of social adaptation and degree of assimilation. These characteristics are affected by: (1) their initial period of arrival in the United States, (2) the nature of their immigration experience, and (3) the structure and composition of the ethnic communities that they established in the United States.

Here we examine specific demographic characteristics of these three and other Latino groups to better understand how they are similar in some ways, yet different in others. The graphs and tables provide insight into the rate and level of assimilation of each of these groups into the fabric of American society.

"HISPANIC" OR "LATINO"

The word Hispanic comes from the Latin word Hispania, designating residents of the Iberian Peninsula (Gimenez 1989). Since 1980, the

official census designation of any person of Spanish origin or descent is Hispanic. Hence, the term Hispanic now includes (1) Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Chicanos; (2) Puerto Ricans; (3) Cubans; (4) Central and South Americans; and (5) other.

Many members of the Spanish-speaking community prefer the term Latino (or Latina for a female), as opposed to the census term Hispanic. "Latino" is a cultural-linguistic concept encompassing all groups in the Americas who share the Spanish language, culture, and traditions (Gimenez 1989, Padilla 1985).

MINORITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Out of a total U.S. population of 248,709,873 in 1993, there were 61,207,991 persons of recognized minority status, or one in four Americans. African Americans represent the largest minority group in the United States today, followed by Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans (Figure 1). The 22,354,059 Latinos (8.3 percent of the U.S. population) does not include the 3.4 million Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico, but it does include an estimated 672,000 undocumented Latino aliens.

Figure 1. Minorities in the United States and percent of the Total Minority Population, 1990

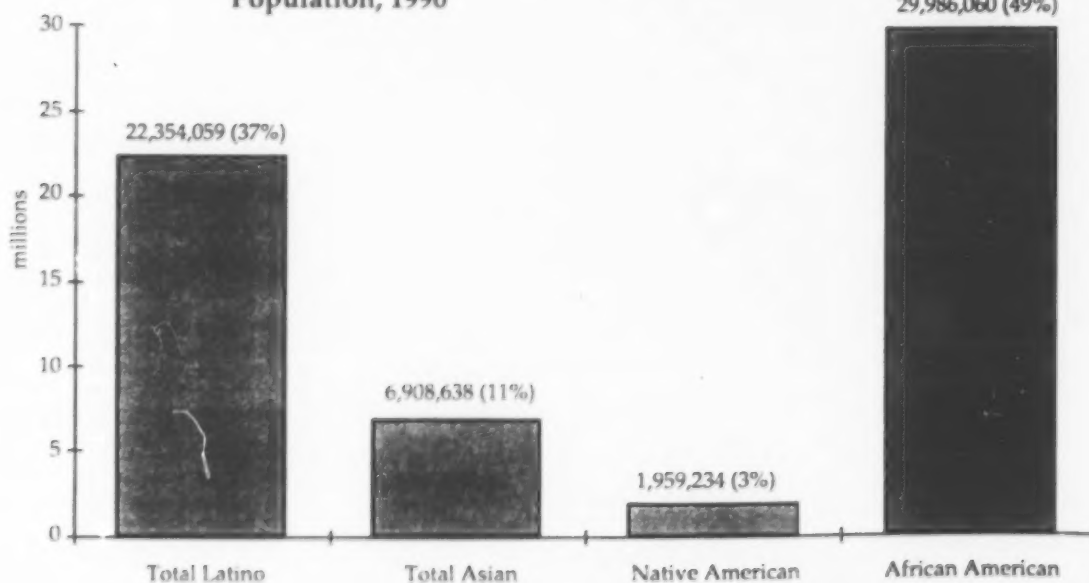


**Table 1. U.S. Latino Population
by Origin, 1990**

	(1,000)	% of total Latinos
LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES		
Mexican	13,496	61.2
Puerto Rican	2,728	12.4
Cuban	1,044	4.7
Salvadoran	565	2.6
Dominican	520	2.4
Guatemalan	269	1.2
Nicaraguan	203	0.9
Honduran	131	0.6
Other Central American	156	0.7
Colombian	379	1.7
Ecuadorian	191	0.9
Peruvian	175	0.8
Argentinean	101	0.5
Other South American	190	0.9
Spaniard	519	2.4
Other Latino	1,403	6.4
Total Latinos	22,070	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census,
1990 Census of the Population.

**Table 2. U.S. Latino Geographic
Distribution, 1990**

California	6,762,000	33.7%
Texas	4,313,000	21.5%
New York	1,982,000	9.9%
Florida	1,586,000	7.9%
Illinois	855,000	4.3%
Arizona	725,000	3.6%
New Jersey	638,000	3.2%
New Mexico	549,000	2.7%
Colorado	421,000	2.1%
Other U.S.	<u>2,245,000</u>	<u>11.2%</u>
Total	20,076,000	100.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census,
1990 Census of the Population.

DISTRIBUTION OF LATINOS BY STATE OF RESIDENCE

The largest concentration of Latinos occurs in the largest state in the nation, California (Table 2). One in three Latinos call California home, and more than four in five (85%) of these Latinos are Mexican Americans.

One in five Latinos lives in Texas where 90 percent are Mexican Americans. The third largest concentration is in New York which has a Latino population of almost two million. Three in five of the New York Latinos are Puerto Rican (Boswell 1985). The Latino population of Florida is 1.6 million and seven in ten of these Latinos are Cubans. Of these major settlement states, California experienced the most dramatic rate of growth in Latino population between 1980 and 1990 (166.3 percent), followed by Florida (151.3 percent), Texas (122.1 percent), and New York (102.8 percent).

Table 3. Latinos as Percentage of Total Population, 1980 & 1990

	% in 1980	% in 1990
New Jersey	6.7	9.6
Nevada	6.7	10.4
Florida	8.8	12.2
New York	9.5	12.3
Colorado	11.8	12.9
Arizona	16.2	18.8
Texas	21.0	25.5
California	19.2	25.8
New Mexico	36.6	38.2
United States	6.4	9.0

However, proportionately to the total population, the state with the highest Latino representation is New Mexico, where almost four in ten residents are Latino. In comparison, one in four of California residents is Latino. In all states of major Latino concentration, both the number and proportional representation of Latinos increased between 1980 and 1990 (Table 3).

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Hispanic Americans Today," *Current Population Reports*, 1993.

CONCENTRATION OF LATINOS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

In selected metropolitan areas, Los Angeles (with a population of 4.8 million) has, by far, the largest number of Latinos. New York has the second highest Latino population, followed by Miami and San Francisco (Table 4).

Considering Latino representation as a proportion of the total population of an area, however, the San Antonio metropolitan area exceeds all others, for over half the metropolitan area's population is Latino. In Los Angeles, nearly three in ten residents are Latinos; Miami has the third highest proportional representation, followed by Houston, San Diego, and Phoenix (Garcia 1991).

Table 4. Latino Population in Selected Metro Areas, 1993

	(1000)	% of Area's Population
Phoenix	345	14.8
San Diego	511	17.9
Dallas/Ft. Worth	519	10.7
San Antonio	620	51.4
Houston	772	18.5
Chicago	893	9.9
San Francisco	970	14.7
Miami	1,062	28.0
New York	2,778	13.8
Los Angeles	4,780	29.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Hispanic Americans Today," *Current Population Reports*, 1993.

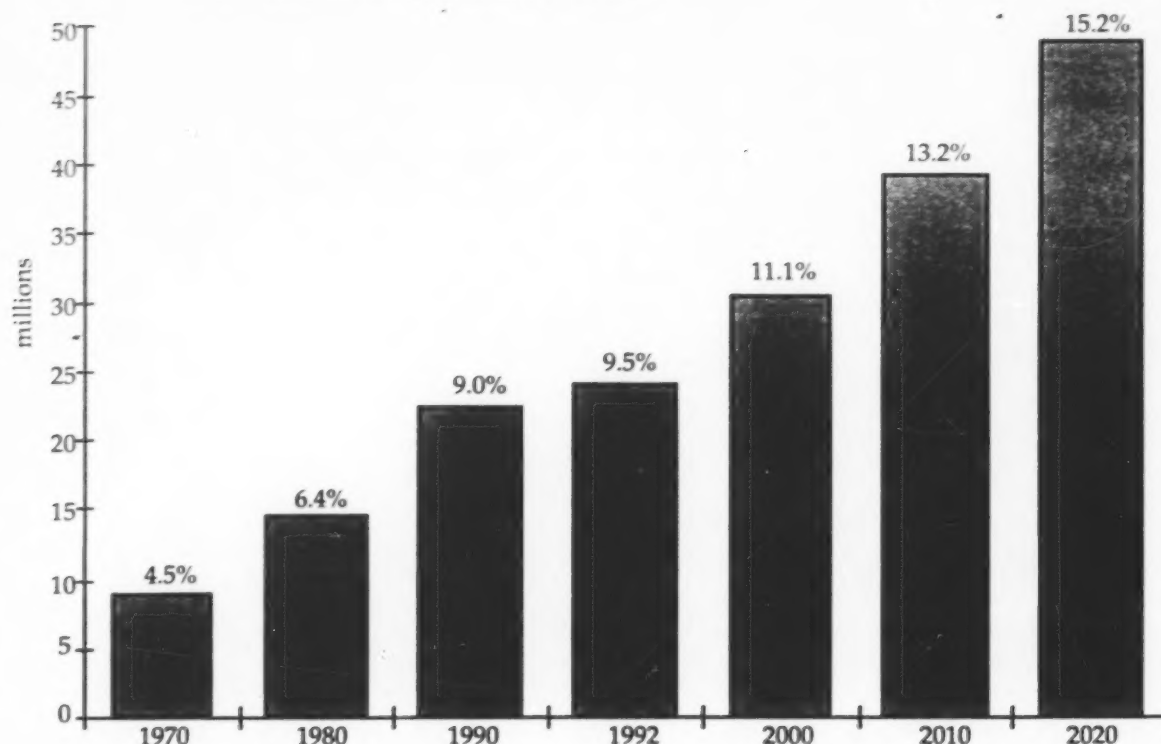
GROWTH RATE OF THE LATINO POPULATION

The rapid growth of the Latino population in the United States (shown in Figure 2) is attributed to their higher-than-average fertility rates and high rates of immigration (Gonzales 1992, Stroup-Benham and Trevino 1991). In 1950, there were only 4 million Latinos in the United States, but over the next decade, their population increased to 6.9 million. By 1970, the Latino population reached 9.1 million and their numbers continued increasing to 24.1 million in 1992. By the year 2000, Latinos will become the largest

minority group in the United States, with an estimated population of 30.6 million. Their average growth rate is well above that of both the general U.S. population and African Americans (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1988).

As the size of the Latino population increases so does its proportional representation among the total U.S. population. In 1970, only 4.5 percent of the U.S. population was Latino; by 1990, the overall proportional representation had doubled to 9 percent. Projections are that by the turn of the century, slightly more than one in ten residents of the U.S. population will be Latino.

Figure 2. Latino Population Growth as a % of Total U.S. Population (Middle Series Projections), 1970-2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Projections of the Hispanic Population, 1983-2080," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 995, 1985.

LATINO DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

From the outside, the U.S. Latino population may appear as one monolithic group, but in fact, it is very diverse and heterogeneous. As an example of this diversity, consider the many terms that have been used to describe Latinos, reflecting their differing historical and cultural experiences (some of these terms are listed in Table 5).

Table 5. Terms used to Refer to Latinos

Hispanos	Hispano Americanos
Hispanic	Hispanic Americans
Spanish Surname	Mexican Americans
Spanish Speaking	Mestizos
Spanish Origin	Cholos/Cholas
Latino/Latina	Mejicanos
Latino/a Americano/a	Mulattos

Table 5, continued on next page

Historically, the Spanish-speaking people in New Mexico were called *Hispanos* or *Hispano Americanos*. Latinos in Texas are sometimes called *Tejanos*; they refer to themselves as *Latino Americanos* or *Latin Americans*, or as members of *La Raza*. Over the years, the U.S. Census has classified Latinos as *Spanish Surname*, *Spanish Speaking*, or *Spanish Origin*. Today, the census refers to Latinos as *Hispanics*.

Table 5, continued from previous page

La Raza	Latin Americans
La Raza Cosmica	Pachucos/Pachucas
Chicano/Chicana	Pochos/Pochas
Tejanos	Cuban/Cubanos
Californios	Manitos
Espanoles	Alambristas
Mojados	Centro Americanos
Puerto Ricans	Peninsulares
Gente de Razon	Criollos
Negros/Negras	Peones
Indios/Indias	

Source: Gonzales, *Sociology of the Mexican American Family*, book manuscript, 1995.

POCKETS OF DIVERSITY

The diversity of the Latino community is also apparent when considering the composition of the Latino population of Los Angeles and San Francisco counties (Tables 6a and b). Los Angeles county has a Latino population of 3.3 million, including 2.5 million Mexican Americans. The second largest group of Latinos in Los Angeles County is Salvadorans, followed by Guatemalans, and then all the other groups who live in Los Angeles County (Table 6a).

Likewise the Latino population of San Francisco reveals a great diversity. Mexican Americans constitute 40 percent of the total Latino population, while Central and South Americans make up another 40 percent (Table 6b). In contrast, eight in ten (77 percent) of the Latinos living in Los Angeles County are Mexican Americans.

Table 6a. Latino Population of Los Angeles County, 1991

Peruvian	21,902
Ecuadorian	18,958
Colombian	21,678
Other South American	32,849
Salvadoran	253,086
Panamanian	5,281
Nicaraguan	33,846
Honduran	22,968
Guatemalan	125,091
Other Central American	12,776
Dominican	2,202
Cuban	47,534
Puerto Rican	41,048
Mexican Americans	2,519,514
Other Latino	<u>147,383</u>
Total Latinos	3,306,116

Table 6b. Latino Population of San Francisco County, 1991

Salvadoran	17,979
Panamanian	438
Nicaraguan	10,900
Honduran	591
Guatemalan	3,652
Dominican	154
Cuban	1,772
Puerto Rican	4,409
Mexican Americans	38,326

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of the Population, 1992*, CD ROM data.

Immigration Patterns and Immigrant Communities

LATINO IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Between 1981 and 1990, a total of 7.3 million legal immigrants settled in the United States. Of this number almost half (47 percent) came from Latin American nations (Figure 3). The second largest source during this time period was the various Asian nations (37 percent). Meanwhile, only 10 percent came from Europe; 2 percent from Canada. Among the top sending nations, Mexico is, by far, the largest source (Table 7).

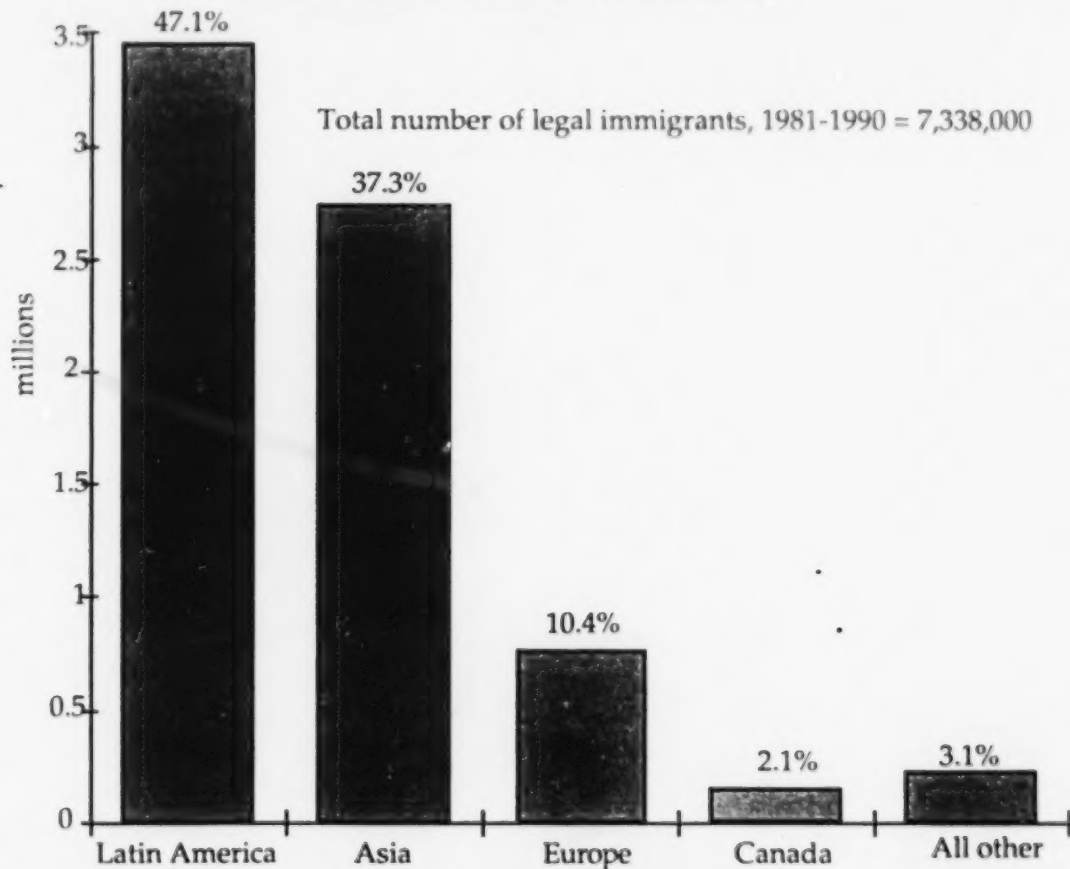
Of all foreign-born persons residing in the United States today, almost four in ten are Latinos. Accordingly, Spanish is the number one foreign language spoken in the United States. Of the slightly more than seven million foreign-born persons in the Latino community today, six in ten are from Mexico, one in seven is from Central America, and about one in ten is from South America or Cuba (Figure 4).

Table 7. Major Sources of U.S. Immigration 1991

Mexico	948,000
Philippines	68,800
Haiti	47,000
El Salvador	46,900
India	42,700
Dominican Republic	42,400
China	39,900
Korea	25,400
Jamaica	23,000
Guatemala	19,000
Vietnam	14,800
Laos	12,500
Cuba	9,500
Thailand	9,300

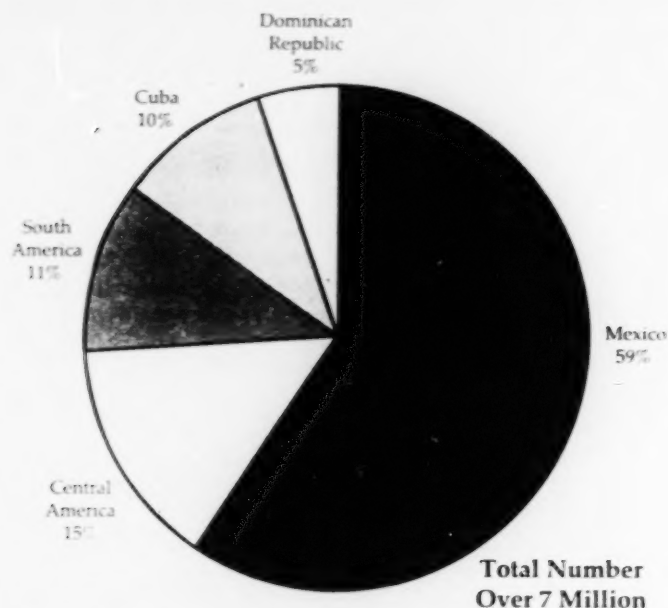
Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1992.

Figure 3. Legal Immigration by Area of Origin and Percentage of Total Immigration from Each Area, 1981-1990



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Hispanic Americans Today*, 1993

Figure 4. Foreign-Born Persons from Latin America in the United States, 1990



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Hispanic Americans Today*, 1993

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

In the shadow of the controversy over the social and economic effects of California's Proposition 187, we note that, according to the most recent Immigration and Naturalization Service figures, there were about 3.2 million undocumented aliens in the United States in 1993. California has the largest number — four in ten were living and working in California. New York state has the second largest number, followed by Florida and Texas. Overall, only slightly more than 1 percent of the total U.S. population are undocumented aliens; less than 5 percent of the population of California (Table 8).

Table 8. Undocumented Aliens in the United States by State, 1993.

	Number	% of total
California	1,275,000	39.8%
New York	485,000	15.2%
Florida	345,000	10.8%
Texas	320,000	10.0%
Illinois	170,000	5.3%
New Jersey	125,000	3.9%
Massachusetts	48,000	1.5%
Arizona	47,000	1.5%
Virginia	37,300	1.2%
Georgia	28,000	0.9%
All other states	319,700	10.0%
Total United States	3,200,000	100.0%
Total California population	29,760,021	4.28% of population, undocumented.
Total U.S. population	248,709,873	1.29% of population, undocumented.

Source: Penny Loeb et al., "To Make a Nation,"
U.S. News & World Report, October 1993, pgs. 47-54.

Table 9. Undocumented Aliens: Estimated Number from Ten Top Countries of Origin, 1993

Mexico	682,000
El Salvador	288,000
Guatemala	128,000
Canada	96,000
Poland	96,000
Philippines	96,000
Haiti	96,000
Nicaragua	64,000
Colombia	64,000
The Bahamas	64,000

Source: Penny Loeb et al., "To Make a Nation," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 1993, pgs. 47-54.

Table 10. Average Annual Income of Latino Legal Immigrants, 1990

Peru	\$12,780
Colombia	\$11,749
Ecuador	\$11,205
Nicaragua	\$10,061
El Salvador	\$9,840
Dominican Republic	\$9,695
Guatemala	\$9,045
Honduras	\$8,293
Mexico	\$8,233

Source: Michael J. Mandel and Christopher Farrell, "The Immigrants," *Business Week*, July 13, 1994, pgs. 114-122.

Table 11. Percentage of Latino Legal Immigrants on Welfare, 1990

Ecuador	2%
Honduras	2%
Peru	1%
Nicaragua	1%
Colombia	2%
Guatemala	2%
Dominican Republic	7%
El Salvador	2%
Mexico	2%

Source: Michael J. Mandel and Christopher Farrell, "The Immigrants," *Business Week*, July 13, 1994, pgs. 114-122.

Of the estimated 3.2 million undocumented aliens in the United States today, only one in five (21 percent) is from Mexico (Table 9). Most of these undocumented Mexican aliens are residents of California or Texas.

Many economic and labor market studies demonstrate that undocumented aliens do not take jobs from U.S. citizens but rather they actually create jobs and contribute to the growth and vitality of the U.S. economy. Still, many people believe just the contrary. Even though it is difficult to know exactly how much undocumented aliens are paid for their labor, a number of studies show that they usually earn at or below the minimum wage. Therefore, if we can determine the average wages paid to legal resident aliens, we can safely assume that undocumented aliens earn less.

The average annual income of legal resident Latino immigrants amounts to only a little more than \$10,000 per year. (The minimum hourly wage provides, at most, an annual income of \$9,200.) And recall that a family earning less than \$14,500 a year is living below the federal government's established poverty level.

Mexican legal resident aliens earn almost \$2,000 less than the average Latino legal resident, earning an average of only \$8,233 per year — \$1,000 less than the average annual minimum wage (Table 10). Undocumented Mexican immigrants earn even less than that. Therefore, we can safely infer that undocumented Latino aliens take jobs that very few U.S. citizens would ever consider for themselves, because of not only these unattractive potential earnings, but also reputedly poor working conditions.

An issue related to jobs and wages is the often-heard claim that undocumented aliens take advantage of welfare services and benefits. However, only 2 percent of the total Latino legal resident aliens receive any welfare benefits. Because it is well known that undocumented aliens are reluctant to use welfare services and will only do so in emergencies, the actual use of welfare services by Latino undocumented immigrants must certainly be less than 2 percent (Table 11).

**AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME
AMONG LATINO FAMILIES**

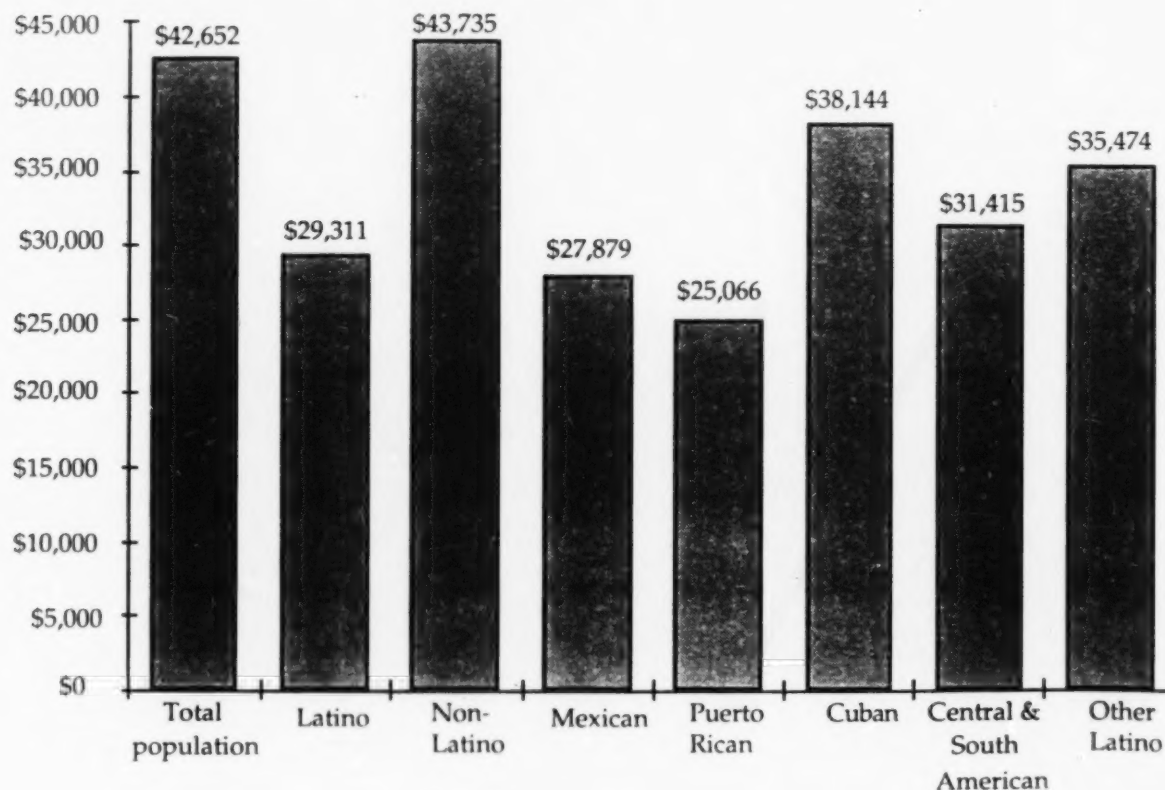
The average annual income for Latino families was less than \$30,000 a year in 1990, compared with an average annual family income for non-Latino families of almost \$44,000 (Figure 5). The fact that Latino families are larger than the average non-Latino family means that their per-capita income is much less than what the difference in total annual family income would indicate (Gonzales 1994).

Among Latinos, Puerto Rican families have the lowest average annual income — \$25,000 a year, followed closely by Mexican American families, with an average annual income of almost \$28,000 a year. Cuban Americans earn the highest average annual income among Latino families as a group, with an annual income of \$38,000 (Figure 5).

Fewer than one in ten families in the general population earns less than \$10,000 a year, but one in five Latino families fall into this extremely low income category. Among Latinos, Puerto Rican families are the most likely to have annual incomes of less than \$10,000, as one out of three Puerto Rican families earn less than \$10,000 a year. Latinos with the smallest number of families earning less than \$10,000 a year are the Cubans, followed by the Central and South Americans (Table 12).

At the other end of the income spectrum, only one in seven Latino families has incomes of more than \$50,000 a year, compared to almost one-third of the non-Latino families. Among Latinos, Cubans have the highest percentage of families in the upper income bracket, while Mexican Americans have the fewest (Table 12).

Figure 5. Average Family Income Among Latinos and for the Total U.S. Population, 1990



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Persons of Hispanic Origin, 1990 Census of Population.

Table 12. Percentage of Families with Income of \$10,000 or Less, or \$50,000 More, in 1990, by Group.

	≤\$10,000	≥\$50,000
Total U.S. population	9.4%	30.5%
Latinos	18.6%	14.7%
Non-Latinos	8.7%	31.8%
Mexican	17.2%	12.2%
Puerto Rican	33.5%	14.1%
Cuban	13.8%	24.0%
Central and South American	14.4%	16.6%
Other Latino	16.4%	23.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Persons of Hispanic Origin," 1990 Census of Population.

LATINO FAMILIES AND POVERTY RATES

These overall low incomes typically earned by Latino families mean that one in four Latino families lives below the government's official poverty level for a typical family of four. In contrast, only one in ten families in the general population lives below this level (Table 13). Despite these facts, a recent Department of Labor study reports that Latino families living in poverty are the most likely of any poverty-ridden group to have one adult employed full-time in the labor market.

Among Latinos, Puerto Rican families are the most deprived. Almost four in ten Puerto Rican families live below the poverty level. This compares with Cuban American families who have the lowest poverty rate found among Latinos as a group (Vega 1990). See Table 13.

The children in Latino families are most directly affected by poverty. Among non-Latinos, fewer than one in five persons in poverty is a child; whereas among Latinos almost two in five children are poor. Again, Puerto Ricans are the worst off with more of their children being deprived (Table 13).

Female-headed households are the most likely to fall into a permanent life of poverty. In the general population, one-third of all female-headed households experience poverty. However, the situation is worse among Latinos, for almost half of all Latino families headed by women are living in poverty. The situation is most devastating among Puerto Rican families, where almost two in three of all families headed by women subsist below the poverty level (Table 13).

Table 13. Poverty Statistics for Latinos, Total U.S. Population and Non-Latinos.

	% families below the poverty level, 1990	Poverty rate (%) for persons ≤ 18 years, 1990	% female-headed households below the poverty level, 1991
Total U.S. population	10.7%	20.0%	33.4%
Latinos	25.0%	38.0%	48.3%
Non-Latinos	9.5%	18.0%	31.7%
Mexican	25.0%	36.0%	45.7%
Puerto Rican	37.5%	57.0%	64.4%
Cuban	13.8%	31.0%	—
Central and South American	22.2%	35.0%	39.3%
Other Latino	19.4%	36.0%	49.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Persons of Hispanic Origin," 1990 Census of Population.

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LATINOS

Perhaps the long-term effects of poverty on Latino children is most dramatically revealed in their lower levels of advancement in school. For adults, slightly more than one in ten Latinos has had less than five years of formal education. This compares to less than 2 percent of those 25 years or older in the non-Latino population. Among Latinos, Mexican Americans have the highest proportion of individuals with less than five years of education — one in seven persons (Table 14).

Only half of all Latinos have graduated from high school, compared to eight out of ten adults in the non-Latino population. Again, within the Latino community, Mexican Americans have the lowest level of high school completion — slightly more than four in ten (Table 14).

While as a group only half of all Latinos graduate from high school, the variation among states is significant. A state by state comparison of Latino graduation rates shows that those states with the largest Latino populations, e.g. California and Texas, have lower rates of high school completion than states with smaller Latino populations, e.g., Colorado and New Mexico (Table 15). These low rates experienced by some states are partly due to the facts that these same states experience recent and continual immigration and that Mexican immigrants typically arrive in the United States with only minimal levels of education.

As a group, Latinos are under-represented among the ranks of college graduates. While almost one in four non-Latinos have graduated from college, only one in ten Latinos have. Among Latinos, Mexican Americans have the lowest rate of college graduation, while Cuban Americans have the highest rate (Table 14).

As with high-school graduates, the percentage of Latinos who are college graduates varies significantly from state to state. Again, the states with large Latino populations have the lowest college graduation rates (Table 15). But in terms of the actual number of Latino college graduates, California has the largest number of graduates, followed by Texas and Florida.

The fact that Cubans have the highest proportion of college graduates among Latinos (Table 14) shows up in Florida's having the highest rate of college graduates (Table 15). Seventy percent of Florida's Latino population of 1.6 million are Cubans. In contrast, California's Latino population is over 7 million, with 85 percent being Mexican Americans.

California, the state with the most Latinos, also has the most who have graduate or professional degrees, followed by Florida, Texas, and New York. Florida, with a smaller Latino population, nevertheless has the second highest number of Latinos with advanced degrees. Again, this is explained by the prevalence of Cubans among its Latinos (Table 14).

Table 14. Education Statistics for Latino Immigrant Groups, Total U.S. Population and Non-Latinos, 1991.

	% persons ≥ 25 years with less than 5 years education	% persons ≥ 25 years with high school education or more	% persons ≥ 25 years with 4 years of college or more
Total U.S. population	2.4%	78.4%	21.4%
Latinos	12.5%	51.3%	9.7%
Non-Latinos	1.6%	80.5%	22.3%
Mexican	15.9%	43.6%	6.2%
Puerto Rican	8.4%	58.0%	10.1%
Cuban	7.7%	61.0%	18.5%
Central and South American	8.9%	60.4%	15.1%
Other Latino	5.6%	71.1%	16.2%

U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Hispanic Americans Today," *Current Population Reports*, 1993.

Table 15. Education Statistics for Latinos by State, 1990.

	% Latino High School Graduates	% Latino College Graduates	# Latinos with Graduate or Professional Degrees
Texas	44.6%	7.3%	49,000
Illinois	45.0%	8.0%	12,000
California	45.0%	7.1%	88,000
New York	50.4%	9.3%	45,000
Arizona	51.7%	6.9%	8,000
Massachusetts	52.0%	13.6%	8,000
New Jersey	53.9%	10.8%	15,000
Florida	57.2%	14.2%	55,000
Colorado	58.3%	8.6%	6,000
New Mexico	59.6%	8.7%	10,000
Total United States	49.8%	9.2%	370,000

U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Hispanic Americans Today," *Current Population Reports*, 1993.

CONCLUSION

Thus, there are very real differences among Latinos and between Latinos and non-Latinos in terms of their socio-economic conditions and levels of educational achievement. Part of the disparity can be attributed to differing settlement patterns through time and place. But it is certain that such key political questions as immigration and naturalization, community development, and human opportunities and rights will force Latinos into the political arena. It is in the voting booth that they will begin to address these important social, economic, and political issues.

For their part, Mexican Americans in the Southwest are most involved with the issues of immigration, employment opportunities, the quality of education, and citizenship rights. The Puerto Ricans are concerned about the quality of

life in their urban communities and the various social problems that have plagued their homes and families over the past 30 years. The question of the future of Castro's Cuba and the fate of the thousands of refugees who desire to obtain political freedom in the United States are the key issues for the Cuban American community.

And there are many other social, economic, and political problems of concern in the Latino community today. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that members of the Latino community continue to recognize that, while they differ in many ways, they are nonetheless bound and committed to one another by their common language, culture, and historical experiences. It is these similarities, rather than the minor differences, that will guide the Latino community now and in the near future.

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SIDEPOINT

JULIAN SAMORA, 1971

We find then a situation in which poor people from a developing nation attempt to make a living in another nation at wages which are lower, but acceptable from their nation's standard. In order to do this, however, they must violate laws, suffer indignities and many inconveniences. They must live in substandard conditions, away from their families, always in fear of being apprehended and without being integrated into the community nor the society in which they may live. In the process they keep wages down, they displace American labor, and they hamper the efforts of the American labor unions to organize and to bargain collectively. On the other hand, it is not difficult to understand why unemployed Mexican aliens cross the border, nor why employers are so willing to hire them. This is the readily available work force. They have absolutely no rights in the host country. They have absolutely nothing to say about the wages which they receive. They are single individuals for the most part. They are a docile group by the very conditions under which they are here. They represent a tremendous oversupply of labor and, thus, can be replaced at will. They have absolutely no bargaining position because the mere threat of being turned in to the Border Patrol prevents bargaining. They have been gotten rid of at a moment's notice, or whenever the harvest is over, or sometimes without even being paid if an employer is unscrupulous. (pp.101-102)

Source: Julian Samora. 1971, *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story*, with the assistance of Jorge A. Bustamante F. and Gilbert Cardenas (University of Notre Dame)